

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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CRIMINAL NO: 08-252

v.

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SECTION: "I"

ARTHUR CHABAUD

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FACTUAL BASIS

Should this matter proceed to trial, the United States would prove beyond a reasonable doubt, through credible testimony and reliable evidence, the following facts:

On January 14, 2007, the Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Department was dispatched to a mobile home explosion at 12357 Chavers Lane, Tickfaw, Louisiana. Upon arrival, agents discovered that three individuals were severely burned. All three were transported to local hospital burn units for their injuries. Deputies and Agents discovered that there were five individuals inside the residence at the time of the explosion. These individuals were identified as Mandy Farrell (homeowner), Arthur Chabaud (burn victim), Megan Hood (burn victim), Sylvia Stewart (deceased) and a child that was approximately six years old.

When the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived on the scene, they located Sylvia Stewart lying on the ground outside of the trailer, suffering from second and third degree burns to her head, face, neck, thorax, abdomen, pelvis, and her upper and lower extremities. She was burned

over 85% of her body. She was transported by air to Baton Rouge General Hospital Burn Unit where she eventually died as a result of the injuries that she suffered in the explosion.

According to the responding paramedics, they found Megan Hood lying outside of the trailer. Megan Hood told the paramedics “that they were cooking meth and the next thing she knew she was on fire.” After being treated on the scene, she was transported to Baton Rouge General Hospital by ground transportation where she was treated for first, second, and third degree burns over 40% of her body.

Arthur Chabaud was transported to North Oaks Hospital to be treated for burns to his body. Chabaud told the responding deputies that he saw the explosion, ran to the residence, and pulled Sylvia Stewart and Megan Hood from the burning residence.

The child, Christopher Chabaud, was examined by EMS workers but did not appear to suffer from any burns or injuries. His mother, Mandy Farrell was identified as the owner of the trailer. She was on the scene of the explosion but did not receive any injuries.

When Agents talked to Farrell at the scene, she indicated that Chabaud was present at her (Farrell’s) residence when Hood and Stewart arrived. Farrell stated she observed Stewart with a blue bag in her possession as she entered the residence with Hood. Stewart informed Farrell she intended to manufacture methamphetamine at the residence. Farrell said she observed several items contained in the bag. She described the contents as being blue napkins, pliers, butane bottles and coffee filters. Farrell stated that she observed Stewart and Chabaud having a conversation before she (Farrell) went to sleep. Farrell stated that she was later awakened by the explosion and she exited the residence. Farrell stated that she retrieved her child and ran to Chabaud’s residence which was located in the same mobile home park. When she arrived at Chabaud’s residence, he was already in the shower

screaming “I’m burning”.

During a search of the residence, agents located a gallon size container of camp fuel and a propane tank. Agents recovered several trash bags outside the residence. These bags contained a used HCL generator and numerous blue paper towels which contained a white sludge type substance consistent with pseudoephedrine binder material. According to Special Agents of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration these items are commonly recovered at sites where methamphetamine labs are discovered.

On January 29, 2007, S/A Chad Scott and Heath Martin conducted a taped interview of Megan Hood at her residence in Albany, Louisiana. During this interview, Hood stated that she met Stewart at the Walgreens Drug Store in Hammond, Louisiana. Hood drove Stewart from Walgreens to Mandy Farrell’s residence. According to Hood, she observed Stewart carrying a bag from Walgreens. Hood stated that when she picked Stewart up, another female named Melissa was signing for a box of pseudoephedrine. Once Stewart and Hood arrived at Farrell’s trailer, they met with Chabaud. Hood stated that Chabaud and Stewart went into a wooded area near the trailer and retrieved a propane bottle. Hood stated that Chabaud told Stewart he wanted to go to another location to conduct the “cook” because there were too many people around Farrell’s trailer. Hood then observed Chabaud and Stewart in the bathroom. Stewart was in the process of blending up pseudoephedrine pills while Chabaud was in the process of draining propane from the tank into a separate container. Hood stated that approximately five minutes after observing Stewart and Chabaud, the trailer exploded. The day before the explosion, Hood stated that she drove Stewart to Denham Springs, Louisiana where she (Stewart) purchased approximately three boxes of pseudoephedrine. According to Hood, she has obtained methamphetamine from Stewart at least four

times in the past.

On January 29, 2007, S/A Chad Scott and Heath Martin conducted a taped interview of Mandy Farrell at the Tangipahoa Parish Jail in Amite, Louisiana. According to Farrell, at the time of the explosion, Arthur Chabaud, Sylvia Stewart, Megan Hood and her son Christopher Chabaud were inside the trailer. Stewart asked Farrell if they could utilize the trailer to “cook” methamphetamine. A few minutes later Farrell observed Hood, Stewart and Chabaud inside the bathroom. Farrell observed Stewart and Chabaud with the propane tank, tubing and a glass bottle inside the bathroom. According to Farrell, Stewart and Chabaud were draining propane into the glass bottle. Farrell stated that she observed Chabaud and Stewart carrying bags when they entered the mobile home. Farrell observed Stewart removing the contents of the bag which Farrell described as blue napkins, batteries and hoses. Farrell was asked by Chabaud for a set of pliers to open the batteries. According to Farrell, Stewart offered to provide Farrell with methamphetamine for use of the trailer. Once the trailer exploded, Farrell went out of her window to get her son. Once she got to the front of the trailer, she retrieved her son. Farrell went to Chabaud’s house and heard Chabaud screaming that he was burning. As Chabaud came out of the shower, he shouted to Farrell “I was not there.” She stated that she was scared to say anything to officers about Chabaud the night of the explosion because she was afraid of him and his family. When asked about her prior relationship with Chabaud, Farrell stated that she has used methamphetamine with Chabaud on numerous occasions. Farrell also stated that Chabaud has told her in the past, that he and Stewart “cook” the best dope (methamphetamine).

On September 25, 2008, Arthur Chabaud was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury in connection with this case. Pursuant to this indictment an arrest warrant was issued for Arthur Chabaud. Special Agent Chad Scott of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Special Agent Dan Hebert of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), and other task force agents arrested Arthur Chabaud at his residence. Mr. Chabaud was advised of his rights by the agents and Mr. Chabaud gave the agents written consent to search his residence where he lived with his brother. During the search agents recovered drug paraphernalia from both Arthur Chabaud's and his brother's bedrooms. Agents also located a Jennings model T-380, .380 caliber handgun (serial number 1479253) in Arthur Chabaud's closet. Arthur Chabaud told the agents that the gun belonged to his uncle and that he (Arthur) put it in the closet. Arthur Chabaud asked Agent Scott what the charges stemmed from. Agent Scott told him that they were related to the explosion of the methamphetamine lab that killed Sylvia Stewart. Chabaud stated that he was not at the trailer and only went there when he heard the explosion to help rescue the others. He went on to say, "I am not going down for this, I have several witnesses".

Arthur Chabaud was transported to the Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Department substation in Hammond, Louisiana to be interviewed. Prior to the interview, Chabaud was advised of his constitutional rights by S/A Hebert. Chabaud indicated that he understood his rights and agreed to waive them and give a statement to the agents.

During the interview, Chabaud admitted that he was present in the trailer with Sylvia Stewart, Megan Hood, Mandy Farrell, and the child when the trailer exploded. He indicated that he was watching Sylvia Stewart manufacture methamphetamine. He went on to state that pseud-ephedrine pills were in the blender and when Stewart turned the blender on the trailer exploded. Chabaud drew

a map of the trailer and pointed out where each person was standing just before the explosion.

Chabaud stated that Stewart utilized 4-5 boxes of pseud-ephedrine pills during each cook. According to Chabaud this amount of pills usually yielded approximately 8-10 grams of methamphetamine. He went on to state that approximately eight months after he got out of jail he began doing methamphetamine with Stewart and that he had purchased boxes of pills that were utilized by Stewart to manufacture methamphetamine.

During this statement, Chabaud was confronted about the statements that both Megan Hood and Mandy Farrell gave to law enforcement officials concerning his involvement. Chabaud then admitted that he was directly involved with Stewart in manufacturing the methamphetamine. He stated that he was holding and draining the propane tank when Sylvia Stewart turned the blender on and the trailer blew up. Just after the explosion he saw that Stewart was on fire and laid on top of her to try and put out the flames. He went on to say that he and Stewart had manufactured methamphetamine on at least three occasions and that during each cook they made about 8-10 grams of methamphetamine.

At trial, the government would produce the medical record of Sylvia Stewart, Megan Hood, and Arthur Chabaud, as well as photographs of the destroyed trailer. The government would also present the testimony of Megan Hood, Mandy Farrell, Special Agent Chad Scott, Special Agent Dan Hebert, and numerous other law enforcement officials.

READ AND APPROVED:

Maurice E. Landrieu, Jr. (Date)
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Wayne Walker (Date)
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Arthur Chabaud (Date)
Defendant